

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for January 16, 2011

“The Example of the Macedonians”
2 Corinthians 8:2-5

As Paul began to address the repentant within the church of Corinth, he detailed for them certain responsibilities that still remained for them to fulfill.

The first responsibility that Paul brought to the attention of the repentant in 2 Corinthians 7:2-16 was their need to completely separate from his opponents.

The second responsibility that Paul brought to the attention of the repentant was their need to complete the collection for the poverty stricken believers in Jerusalem (2 Corinthians 8:1 - 9:15).

What did Paul share with the Corinthians that helped them to become wholeheartedly committed to completing the collection for the poor believers in 2 Corinthians 8:1-9:15?

The first thing that Paul shared with the Corinthians was the example of the Macedonians (2 Corinthians 8:1-7).

This morning we will be moving on in our text from the source of the Macedonians extraordinary giving in 2 Corinthians 8:1 to a description of the giving itself in 2 Corinthians 8:2-5.

The Macedonian believers were being persecuted by their own countrymen in a similar manner that their Jewish brethren in Judea had been persecuted by their countrymen (1 Thessalonians 2:14-15).

Even though the Macedonians were being sorely tested, “in a great ordeal of affliction,” by all that they were suffering, it did not prevent them from giving liberally when given the opportunity (2 Corinthians 8:2).

The first paradox was this; in the midst of the affliction, the Macedonian Christians experienced an abundance of joy.

The second paradox was this; the Macedonians deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality.

When the deep poverty of the Macedonians overflowed in the wealth of their liberality it looked like the picture Paul painted in 2 Corinthians 8:3-4.

When Paul referred to the Macedonians as giving according to their ability, he simply meant that they gave from the little they had and not beyond what they had.

When Paul said that the Macedonians gave beyond their ability he simply meant that they went beyond what could be reasonably expected from such poor congregations.

When Paul said, "...and this, not as we had expected" he was simply saying that the Macedonians had far exceeded what he and his associates had expected (2 Corinthians 8:5).

Paul's explanation for the Macedonians extraordinary example of giving was that the Macedonians as a matter of first priority had given themselves to God.

May God use the example of the Macedonians to open our eyes to the extraordinary transforming power of God's grace, and may we see that power express itself in our giving.